Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and eighth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 27 February 2017, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Alexey Borodavkin ..... (Russian Federation)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1408th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As I explained at the last plenary meeting, this afternoon we will commence the high-level segment of the Conference. We have two speakers on our list today. Allow me to suspend the meeting briefly in order to greet our first speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, His Excellency Mr. Ayman Safadi.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to warmly welcome our first honoured guest today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, His Excellency Mr. Ayman Safadi. Thank you, Excellency, for coming to address the Conference on Disarmament today. You have the floor.

Mr. Safadi (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me to begin by expressing my deepest condolences on the passing away of Ambassador Churkin.

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I can assure you of our confidence in your ability to successfully guide the work of the Conference and achieve the noble goals that we all share, for the sake of the future of humanity.

The Conference has played an important role in the area of multilateral negotiations and has enabled us to make progress towards establishing a universal consensus-based foundation for disarmament. Unfortunately, however, for more than two decades it has been unable to make any headway towards fulfilling its mandate of negotiating legally binding instruments on disarmament owing to the inability of participants to reach agreement on a programme of work.

However gloomy some people may believe the situation to be, Jordan remains positive that the obstacles standing in the way of the success of this assembly may be overcome through comprehensive dialogue that takes account of the views and concerns of all parties and that restores the confidence of the international community in the role of the Conference as the sole forum for conducting multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The fact that the Conference has, in the past, successfully negotiated important instruments in global circumstances no less complex and polarized than those we see today is a source of hope that a new breakthrough will be made, one that takes account of the concerns of all States and that helps strengthen international peace and security.

Jordan also hopes that progress will be made towards expanding the membership of the Conference in order to make it representative — or more representative of the desires and interests of all States — in line with other major international forums. It is no longer acceptable for the doors of this assembly, which deals with one of the most important international issues, to remain closed to the numerous States that have expressed a desire to join the Conference and that could help it to achieve its noble objectives.

Jordan continues to strive to achieve security for all through the universalization of the major treaties on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Jordan also contributes actively to all international efforts towards disarmament, in particular as regards nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which, as you all know, continues to suffer from both new and long-standing conflicts that pose a serious threat not only to the region and its future, but also to the entire international community and our shared future.

The principled commitment of my country to these objectives is reflected in the fact that it has ratified all international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation and has continued to support efforts to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force. In 2014, Jordan provided comprehensive field training to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which helped to significantly improve the on-site inspection capabilities of the Commission and, as a result, strengthen its ability to fulfil its mandate. Jordan is continuing to work with the

Commission and, earlier this month, it provided training on health, safety and security matters to over 90 international experts in the Dead Sea region.

Jordan will continue to work for peace and stability, both regionally and globally. It will continue to work with the international community to find peaceful solutions to the regional conflicts that have displaced millions of residents and thrust hundreds of thousands more into a state of humanitarian catastrophe. Jordan will continue to seek a peaceful solution to the Palestine issue on the basis of a two-State solution, one that grants Palestine independent statehood with borders based on the 4 June 1967 lines and with East Jerusalem as the capital and, at the same time, ensures recognition and security for Israel. Jordan will continue to work with all stakeholders to find a solution to the Syrian crisis, one that is acceptable to the Syrian people, puts an end to their suffering and allows them to realize their aspirations. While thanking the international community for helping Jordan to meet the requirements of more than 1.3 million refugees, we would like to point out that to meet their development needs is to invest in joint security. Indeed, a failure to provide education and training, a failure to show hundreds of thousands of children that they are part of the wider human society, will create an environment of despair and oppression that will prove a fertile breeding ground for sectarianism and terrorism, poisoning the minds of these children and leaving them open to being exploited and misled into a barbaric war against our shared humanity.

Jordan remains committed to its goal of achieving peace, security and stability in the region by opposing terrorism at both a military and an intellectual level. It is also committed to promoting a true and accurate representation of Islam and its noble values, in which humanity and life are celebrated, in order to combat the delusional ideas spread by terrorists.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and provides a solid basis from which to strive towards nuclear non-proliferation. It also acts as the main springboard for helping States to acquire nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. Jordan hopes that the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, due to be held in Vienna in May, will be a starting point from which to implement the outcomes and action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, which cover the three main focuses of the Treaty: nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We hope that the forthcoming review conference will be able to remove the obstacles that led to the failure of the 2015 Review Conference.

Jordan expresses its regret to this distinguished forum that no conference has yet been held on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems, in the Middle East. The failure to convene such a conference runs contrary to the decision taken at the 2010 Review Conference and to the resolution issued at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. The continued failure to implement the resolution on the Middle East undermines confidence in the non-proliferation regime, which the 2010 Review Conference worked so hard to build and which is based on the principle of security for all. We call on the sponsors of the 1995 resolution to redouble their efforts to ensure that it is implemented and to overcome the sense of frustration surrounding the Treaty, which arose as a result of the failure of the most recent review conference to achieve consensus on a final document. We also call on all parties that are refusing or hesitating to participate in the postponed conference, and on those that wish to exceed the mandate of the review conferences, to re-evaluate their positions and to consider the successful attempts made to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the contribution of those achievements to minimizing the nuclear risk and to strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Once again, we insist that finding a sustainable solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict through the creation of an independent sovereign Palestinian State in which all Palestinian national territories are linked geographically, with Jerusalem as its capital, and putting an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, will guarantee security for all

and avert a regional arms race that has the potential to aggravate the conflict and push the two sides further apart.

We look forward to continuing to work with all the States represented here and with all the members of our single united international community to achieve peace and security for all peoples, both in our region and beyond, and to combat terrorism, which poses a threat to us all. We hope to make tangible progress in our efforts to create a world free of weapons of mass destruction, in which peace, security and stability for all prevail.

Thank you for granting me this valuable opportunity to speak to you. I wish you every success in your work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank His Excellency for his statement. I would also like to express my particular gratitude for the congratulations addressed to me and for the words of sympathy on the passing of Ambassador Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin.

I will now suspend the meeting for a few minutes in order to escort Mr. Safadi from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, I would like to resume our meeting and warmly welcome our honoured guest, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. Bert Koenders. Thank you, Excellency, for coming to address the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

Mr. Koenders (Netherlands): Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, it is a great honour for me to have this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament today.

One hundred and ten years ago major and small powers met in The Hague to discuss matters of war and peace. They adopted a series of conventions to reduce military conflict. The Second Hague Peace Conference, as it became known, was commemorated here in Geneva last week — and let me take this opportunity to thank the Russian Ambassador for his presidency and for organizing this event.

The participants in the Hague Conference recognized the importance of dialogue and cooperation. In our globalized world, this understanding is needed as much today as it was then. Consider the nuclear testing and other provocations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the use of chemical weapons in Syria, cyberattacks, the threat of terrorism, the risk even of nuclear terrorism and the use of "dirty" bombs.

Geopolitical divisions abound, hampering our efforts to reach common solutions, but we must never lose sight of the fact that none of us can address today's threats alone. They affect the international community as a whole, and the international community must confront them together. There is no other way.

That is why I want to devote my remarks today to the importance of multilateralism. My country seeks and promotes international cooperation on all matters of common interest. Disarmament was in the common interest in 1907 as it is still today in 2017.

Multilateralism — effective multilateralism, I should say — has proven its value time and again. It is not a luxury for good days. It proves itself when the days are more difficult. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a clear example. In the past, we anticipated the possibility of dozens of nuclear-weapon States and constant crises; instead, we now have a regime with near-universal application, a regime that has reduced the chance of nuclear weapons being used, a system that commits States to disarmament, a regime that has definitively put a lid on the threat of a nuclear arms race in Europe and elsewhere. The NPT shows that nuclear arms control is not a zero-sum game: increased security for one does not mean less security for others. Fewer nuclear weapons can mean more security for all.

We have all benefited from these steps towards non-proliferation and disarmament, and we must continue to work to ensure our goals are met, including the "global zero" goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons worldwide.

We are entering a new Review Conference cycle for the NPT. As Chair of the first session of the Preparatory Committee, the Netherlands is aware of the substantial obstacles we are facing: the lack of agreement in 2015; international tensions and polarization; disagreements over progress on disarmament.

My country aims to revive the process and get things moving again. We may not all have precisely the same interests, but we will all win if the objectives of the NPT are met. The Dutch Government is taking a new approach, grounded, I hope, in effective multilateralism. I have entrusted this important task to our disarmament ambassador, who is sitting just behind me, Henk Cor van der Kwast.

We are conducting at the moment extensive worldwide consultations. We want to take the discussions beyond Geneva and Vienna, and we want all countries to be heard — large and small. Last week, together with the Government of Senegal, we held our first regional meeting in Dakar. Next month we will have meetings in Jakarta and Santiago, jointly organized with the Governments of Indonesia and Chile. We are doing this because the NPT benefits all States, not just a few. We seek to accommodate common interests in the best possible way. We want to create new momentum that will carry through the rest of the review process.

Now, we all know that is not going to be easy. I was there also in 2015 and in other review conferences. Negotiations are often difficult, long and sometimes extremely frustrating. The path to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was a rocky one. But the hard work is paying off. The International Atomic Energy Agency has verified that Iran is upholding its commitments. The agreement has proven a success and we will continue to support the Agency's verification role. We call on all parties to continue to fulfil their commitments. If Iran takes steps that are inconsistent with its obligations, this should be raised with its Government, both directly and through multilateral channels.

Thankfully, multilateralism is not exclusively the domain of States. Today's coalitions for disarmament are broader. Non-governmental organizations like the Nuclear Threat Initiative are doing excellent work. They help bridge the divide between different players — I think that is necessary — and offer fresh solutions. Such new forms of multilateralism have allowed us to make great strides in protecting civilians. Take the role of non-governmental organizations in, for instance, demining. Such organizations carry out many of the actual mine clearance operations; they were the first to declare the ambition of a mine-free world by 2025, a goal later adopted by the States parties to the Ottawa Convention; and NGOs are helping those States become mine-free within 10 years of joining the Convention.

Our common efforts to eliminate cluster munitions are also paying off. Under the Netherlands presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2016, the parties agreed to do away with cluster munitions worldwide by 2030. Domestically, we have banned investments in companies that produce, sell or distribute cluster munitions, and we will continue to work with others to reach these goals and help countries affected by these devastating weapons.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have seen what we can achieve by working together, but I do not want to paint too rosy a picture. There is still a lot of work to do. Our willingness and ability to address shared threats will be tested. But there are several ways we can strengthen international security.

First, in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, our work will benefit from a process being launched this week to make progress on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We are proud to be a partner in this two-year endeavour together with Canada and Germany. Ending the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons will cap nuclear arsenals and help prevent nuclear arms races. This is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. Again, this is not something that one State, or even a few States, can achieve on their own. We need input and buy-in from all stakeholders and that is why this process will include interaction with all United Nations Member States. We look forward to relaying the expert input for further consideration by the Conference on Disarmament.

This year will see the beginning of negotiations on a nuclear ban treaty. The Netherlands has chosen to take part constructively with an open mind and without being naive. We will examine how and to what extent a ban can contribute to nuclear disarmament. Multilateralism will be the foundation of our efforts here, too. The purpose of a ban should be to strengthen international security and, by extension, our national security but, to meet that goal, a ban must complement the existing multilateral architecture and not weaken it. It must not intensify divisions among States, and it must include nuclear weapons possessors.

With respect to conventional weapons, multilateralism is needed if we are to tackle the many global challenges we face, such as technological advances in weapons systems and the arms trade. A group of governmental experts will meet to discuss lethal autonomous weapons systems. Even though these weapons do not exist yet, we strongly believe we need to stay ahead of the curve. The group will provide a multilateral forum for establishing common understandings. The Netherlands has worked hard over the past few years to get this group set up and will actively participate in its work. Multilateral success often starts with initiatives by a few States. I encourage all States to show such leadership to help advance the broader disarmament agenda.

The arms trade affects us all. Following the intervention in Yemen, the Netherlands further tightened its stringent export control policy. No export licences are granted unless it is absolutely certain that the goods cannot and will not be used in ways that violate human rights or international humanitarian law in Yemen. We have seen the devastating effects of the illegal arms trade from the Sahel to the heart of Europe. Weapons are deadly no matter where they come from or where they are used. The insecurity caused by the illegal arms trade does not stop at our borders and neither should our efforts to combat it. This is why effective implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty is crucial.

Conventional arms control in Europe is in disarray. Our lack of insight into each other's capabilities causes distrust. Subregional crises — like the situation in Ukraine — demonstrate the need to restore trust and to strengthen control over conventional weapons. Again, here we see the importance of multilateralism. Through forums like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Eurasian and transatlantic partners can come together to tackle these pressing issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are but a few examples of why we need multilateral approaches to global challenges. The benefits of effective multilateralism are clear. The significant strides we have made in non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, we have made together. International cooperation is at the heart of our progress, and it is fundamental to our national and international security.

We have achieved significant success through multilateralism. I have provided a few examples — the NPT, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, international efforts on cluster munitions and land mines — but there are many more.

We still face big challenges, and the rising geopolitical tensions are making them even more difficult. We cannot let this stop us from realizing common goals. Our security depends on it. We may not always agree on every detail, or even on some of the broader issues, but the lines of communication must remain open. We must seek to communicate and work together.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, we have a great deal of work to do. In 2017, as in 1907, my country stands ready to work with others to realize the goal of a safer and more secure world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank His Excellency for his statement and am grateful for the congratulations addressed to me.

I will now suspend the meeting for a few minutes in order to escort Mr. Koenders from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Do any of those present wish to take the floor?

That does not seem to be the case. This, then concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, 28 February, at 10 a.m. We will hear addresses from the representatives of Kazakhstan, Latvia, Argentina, Greece, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Japan, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Nigeria and Italy. In the afternoon, they will be followed by representatives of Romania, Guatemala, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Thailand. Tomorrow will be a very full day. Today, if there are no other questions, I declare the meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.